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THOS. HARTNETT

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The Poems of Ida Ahlborn Weeks

THE POEMS
OF
IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Souvenir Edition



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—Spend in all things else,
But of old friends be most miserly.
—*Lowell.*

Contents

Be Hospitable to My Thought	1
The End	2
Three Months to Live	3
In St. Luke's Hospital	4
Salutation	4
Going Home	5
Death	6
Release	7
Free	8
The City in the Clouds	8
Where Roses Bloom, O Let Us Go !	9
Hark to the Night !	10
The Silent Preacher	11
Cinnamon Ferns	12
Blow, Winds of the Prairie !	13
September	14
The Coming of Autumn	15
An Autumn Confession	16
Anointed Eyes	17
My Love	18
Song	19
My Heart Has Laid Hold of Thee !	20
Lilacs	21
The Sensitive Rose of the Prairie	22
How Well Do I Love You ?	23
The Atlas of the Heart	24
Rare Sweetness	24
Assimilation	25
My Heart is Building a Highway	26
Our Sister	27
What I Would Do for Thee	28

CONTENTS

By Perversion	29
The Woman in the Corn	30
Individual Justice	31
Song	32
Let it Pass	33
Surrender	34
Divine Care	35
I Lay Me Hold of Thee !	36
Increased Trust	37
A Common Prayer	38
The Reformer	39
" Let My People Go "	41
Our Present Help	42
Arm me With Love	44
Divine Help	45
The Song of Love	46
Faith and Reason	47
Rejected and Betrayed	48
De Profundis	49
O, the Impartial Christ !	50
Complicity	51
God is Good	52
The Changeful Days Go By	53
After the Martyrdom	54
Thy Presence	55
Whom Does the Giant Fear ?	56
My Gift	57
A Tale for the Critic	58
The Point of View	59
Poetic License	60
A Mystic Song	60
Life Follows Song	61
The Pearl of Song	62
All My Life I've Been a Singer	62
Beauty is Never Afar	63
Before a Painting	63
Heart Sickness	64

CONTENTS

" Roughness "	64
A Farther East	65
My Mistake	66
Pruning	66
Let Us Abide in Love	67
Premonition	68
Living Beauty	69
Lost Harmony Restored	70
At Home	71
My Bridge	72
When Will They Come ?	73
A Song of Egypt	74
Lighten Your Ship	75
Not Twice	76
Loss and Gain	77
Consolation	78
The Nearest Duty	79
A Song of Academic Liberty	80
" No Room in the Inn "	82
A Christmas Rondel	83
The Crafty Violinist	84
Burns	87
Eugene Field	88
Endure	89
Readjustment	90

SONNETS

To-morrow	91
Sunsets	92
At Worship	93
Thy Will Be Done	94
Interpretation	95
Love's Victory	96
O, Radiant Light of Love !	97
Personality	98
Without Haste	99

CONTENTS

In the Forest	100
In Open Air	101
The Poet to the Reader, I	102
The Reader to the Poet, II	103
The Sonnet	104
Renunciation	105
Progress	106
Vindication	107
Waiting	108

JUVENILE VERSE

"Mr. Ten Minutes"	109
When Baby Learned to Walk	110
The Cradle Song	111
The Ensign-bearer of Fontenoy	112
Myrtle's Song	113
A Busy Saturday	114
Primrose Hill	115
Sudden Healing	116
The Dearest of All	117
The Thunder Side	118
"In the Cushion"	118
"Over One and Under Two"	119
A Wonderful Basket	120
The Innkeeper's Daughter	121
Where Does the Ice Go?	123
Sleep, My Baby, Sleep	124
Slumber Song	125
A Man of Many Climes	126

QUATRAINS

Time Enough	128
The Critic	128
Primal Necessity	128
Strenuous Life	129

CONTENTS

Sudden Death	129
A Household Picture	129
At Dawn	129
Pursuit	130
Primroses	130
Election Day	130
"The Real Thing"	130
Desert Dwellers	131
A Nature Faker	131
Anticipation	131
Arise !	131
Kansas Skies	132
Materialism	132
Hidden Resources	132
The Little Arms	133
The Solution	133
Resignation	133
Who Loves	134
To Nature	134
Wild Fancies	134
Interruption	134
My Choice	135
A Prayer	135
How Far ?	135
Rest	136
Great Souls	136
"I'm Nobody"—Emily Dickinson	136

Friendship is a sheltering tree.

—Coleridge.

Wenn Laokoon der Schlangen
Sich erwehrt mit namenlosem Schmerz,
Da empöre sich der Mensch! Es schlage
An des Himmels Wölbung seine Klage
Und zerreisse euer fühlend Herz!

—Schiller.

Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Er kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte.

—Goethe.

Poems

BE HOSPITABLE TO MY THOUGHT

BE hospitable to my thought !
That I have spoken it to thee
Is token of my confidence
That merits some kind courtesy.

Be hospitable to my thought !
However little seem its worth ;
Nay, though it had no worth at all
Except to rouse contempt or mirth.

Be hospitable to my thought !
Oh, more than bread and wine to me,
The kindly patience with my thought,—
The mind's fair hospitality.

THE POEMS OF

THE END

SOME night will come the end,
Or in the cheerful day
The spirit done with clay
Will wing its homeward way.

Let it be day or night —
I do not choose or care ;
My spirit grows aware
Of native realms of air.

When ripe to claim its own,
What easy transit then
From alien zone of men
To its own clime again !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THREE MONTHS TO LIVE

SO brief a time for me ?
If you had said three days,
I still would go my ways
Serene and free.
For, the eternal years
Have neither doubts nor fears.
Your piercing surgeon's eye
Sees but what passes by ;
Your surgeon's hand can feel
What forces harm and heal.
But, past your human ken,
The eternal souls of men !

THE POEMS OF

IN ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL

A MIST hangs over the lake,
And the dancing waves are hid ;
But I know the white-caps leap
Gay under the murky lid.

And I know the sea-gulls fly
Skimming the water's crest ;
And under your cloud, believe,
Life moves for your gain and rest.

SALUTATION

HUSHED be detraction's angry cry !
Hushed be the bare and barren truth !
Thou art a fellow man, as I,
Departing daily from thy youth.

Across the gulf of hate and harm
I reach a kindly hand to thee ;
And of the great Unshortened Arm
May it a welcome symbol be !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

GOING HOME

I'M going home !
I've tarried on the alien plain so long
That in my throat has almost died the song —
I'm going home !

I'm going home,
Where snowy peaks salute the summer sky
And call to life again the submerged I —
I'm going home !

I'm going home !
I touch again the great ancestral heights,
And lo! my dark blooms into countless lights —
I'm going home !

THE POEMS OF

DEATH

WE shrink from death, yet it may be
A final act of charity,
The only kindness left to show
That God remembers ache and throe.
“Come quickly, Death,” how often pray
They who have seen life waste away,
Till even love could hardly find
The old familiar face and mind.
O speed thee, Death, and bring release;
For pain give thy unbroken peace.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

RELEASE

HOW glad I am the old proud life is done!
No longer do I need to seem to know;
Released at last from seeming and from show,
How evenly I see my moments run,
And packed with true achievement every one.

No vagrant longing for the stately years
Disturbs my peaceful hours. I have no place
That asks of me a certain form and grace;
Reduced to nothingness I lose my fears
And turn to action all my fount of tears.

THE POEMS OF

FREE

I HEAR the turnkey at the door ;
The iron bolts he draws,
And I the prey of courts and laws
Shall see the violets bloom once more.

And you beside—oh ! rapturous day !
And the thrushes flooding the wood
With the songs we understood
When love swept all our doubts away.

THE CITY IN THE CLOUDS

TO a city I am going
Wondrous fair ;
This is but a highway
Leading there.

Stay me not, I hasten,
For I see
Spires and lights and turrets
Beckon me.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

WHERE ROSES BLOOM, O LET US GO !

WHERE roses bloom, O let us go !
Far from this land of ice and snow,
Where the auroras glow.
Arise, my love, and let us go
Where once again the roses grow.

How came we here, I do not know.
In some dark hour when hope was low,
And every friend became a foe,
We must have turned to ice and snow
And left the land where roses grow.

I feel again the fragrant zephyrs blow,
I hear again the limpid waters flow,
The merry scythe-men as they mow.
O joy ! O life ! for we shall go
Where once again the roses grow.

THE POEMS OF

HARK TO THE NIGHT !

HARK to the night :
The never-ceasing hum,
The far-off baying of a hound,
A mandolin's soft thrum,
A sound
Of youthful voices in delight.
Say not The silent night —
The voiceful night !
She has her eloquence
Beyond the vulgar sense,
An infinite variety ;
She knows to make
To all who wake
Her own melodious plea.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE SILENT PREACHER

THE preacher tells of Paul,
And Paul at second hand
Is harder than at first,
I fear, to understand.

But when four windows give
A view the fields across,
The mingled gold and green,
I cannot suffer loss.

THE POEMS OF

CINNAMON FERNS

I KNOW a spot where the ferns,
The cinnamon ferns are tall;
They bow in the summer wind
An undulant madrigal.

A gum-tree stands alone,
He nods to the swaying fronds;
They heed him not, for they dream,
They dream of the yonkopin ponds.

The mosses under the spell
Of the waving wands above
Cling close to the earth and drink
Of the hidden springs they love.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

BLOW, WINDS OF THE PRAIRIE !

BLOW, winds of the prairie, blow !
Blow your message, blow :
I listen, I listen as low
As the notes of the atmosphere go ;
I listen, I listen as high
As the ashen sky.
O, I listen beyond the depth and the height
To the home of the winds out of sight.
Blow, winds of the prairie, blow ;
Ye have withered my corn ;
But give me the secret whereof you are born.
Blow, winds of the prairie, blow.

THE POEMS OF

SEPTEMBER

ALL the land is flushed with yellow,—
Flowers of the sun ;
I have seen ten thousand thousand
Blending into one.

All the land is flushed with yellow ;
Goldenrod is here.
O thou prodigal September,
Spendthrift of the year.

I the provident, I gather
Of thy gold to buy
In the winter food and raiment
When the orphans cry.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE COMING OF AUTUMN

I MARKED the summer pass :
For days the wind blew angrily,
With now and then a breath of heat,
That sapped the life from men,
Who would, yet could not, flee
The sounds that beat
By night and day on door and window glass,
Till all the land was like a prison-pen,
Where, weary as the crew on stormy main,
We prayed for rest, we prayed for rain.
One night twice came a lull,
Then, after fiercer blast,
A pattering music sweet,—
I fell asleep,
And when the night had passed
I woke in calm so deep,
So deep, and yet not dull :
And going forth into the morning clear,
Lo ! Autumn whispered, “I am here.”

THE POEMS OF

AN AUTUMN CONFESSION

WHEN Autumn days are here
I catch the squirrel's mood :

From orchard, grove, and field

I gather up my food.

Do you despise me quite

For my housewifely care,

And think I therefore miss

The Autumn sweetness rare ?

Once I did also know

Mere literary days,

When free from labor's stress

I sang my notes of praise.

How could I guess the hand

Of much employment

May miss the dainty touch

To grip the whole intent !

O Autumn, as I glean

Thy wholesome treasures fair,

What glimpses of thy soul

Drift through the mellow air !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

And when thy glory comes,
Thy good in barn and bin,
Oh ! then in leisure ripe
I drink thy beauty in.

I yield me to thy spell,
And having wrought with thee,
I enter in thy joy,
Thy sacred mystery.

ANOINTED EYES

IT seemed that life was bane,
That all its joys were vain,
As from the house I came.
I walked adown the hawthorne lane,
And over me it went like flame,
That life is joy,
That every grief, annoy,
Is but a straw upon the stream,
Or a forgotten dream.

THE POEMS OF

MY LOVE

THE thrush is here !
My Love goes forth at dawn
Music-drawn,
To hear that songster clear.

My Love knows every note of bird,
An understanding seems to be
Between himself and all we see —
A mystic word.

He knows to mutely wait
Like some lone pilgrim at the gate
Who tarries till my lord goes in,
And then amid the din
He enters—my Love abides the hour
Of coming majesty,
And on that wave of power
He calmly floats, to see
A glory that impatient haste
Has never looked upon.
He fears no dearth nor waste,
My Love, by Nature drawn
To confidences sweet,
That even song may not repeat.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

SONG

O SOUL of mine, awaken !
The world awakes with thee,
Its chain of slumber shaken
Into the morning sea.

O soul of mine, awaken !
The sleeping court below,
Of thee, its life, forsaken,
All movement must forego.

O soul of mine, awaken !
The prince is at the gate —
Ah ! by his kiss o'ertaken,
The soul has found its mate !

THE POEMS OF

MY HEART HAS LAID HOLD OF THEE!

MY heart has laid hold of thee!
And thou shalt not go away;
But forever and a day
Shalt thou abide with me;
For my heart has laid hold of thee.

As the fountain yearns for the sea,
So my heart through the long, long years
Has yearned, and with unshed tears
Mine eyes have inquired for thee,
Till the fountain has reached the sea.

My heart has laid hold of thee!
As the vine attains to heights
Where the wonders of days and nights
Break over the mighty tree,
So my heart has attained to thee.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LILACS

THE lilacs bloom, a joy to see,
A joy to breathe the sweet perfume ;
But deeper joy is memory,
When lilacs bloom.

What now avails the marble tomb ?
Sweet Maud walks reverently
Rejoicing in the lilac's plume.

I walk with her again as free
As in those days of ample room
When it was joy enough to me
That lilacs bloom.

THE POEMS OF

THE SENSITIVE ROSE OF THE PRAIRIE

THE sensitive rose of the prairie,
It shrinks at the touch of the hand ;
It shrinks like the heart of a woman
Whom love's first summons command.

The sensitive rose of the prairie !
Oh, sweet are its balls of pink ;
As sweet as the thoughts of a woman
Who stands unaware on love's brink.

The sensitive rose of the prairie,
It pines in the garden or lawn ;
It pines like the life of a woman
From its primal love withdrawn.

The sensitive rose of the prairie,
The soul of the ardent plain,
As love is the soul of the woman,
Her glory and rapture and pain.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

HOW WELL DO I LOVE YOU ?

HOW well do I love you ? oh ! how well ?
Would you like me to reckon and tell ?
Well enough to free you, bid you go ;
Tyrants may fetter, but love is not so.

How well do I love you ? Let me see :
Well enough to keep you still with me,
Glance of your eye and touch of your hand
Holding my pulses at your command.

How well do I love you ? oh ! how well ?
What if I let you the story tell ?
“ Well enough to wed you when the June
Brings the roses for our honeymoon ! ”

THE POEMS OF

THE ATLAS OF THE HEART

THE chart of knowledge, Love,
I pray thee put it by ;
The facts are thick thereon
As stars upon the sky.

Have we not for our use
An older, simpler chart ?
Go to, my Love, and bring
The atlas of the heart.

RARE SWEETNESS

THERE is a sweetness rare
That always gives me pain,
The sweetness of a maid
Whose love has been in vain.

Though true that birds may sing
The sweeter, losing sight,—
I hear through all the song
A wailing in the night.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

ASSIMILATION

FOR thy hard times, what cares the world ? .
It cares not what the ostrich eats,
So it give waving plumes to wear
Parading down the crowded streets.

Nor do thou care, intent to use
All times to their transforming worth :
To feed the soul to beauty's ends,
For this are all the times of earth.

THE POEMS OF

MY HEART IS BUILDING A HIGHWAY

MY heart is building all the day
For you and me a shining street ;
O wild and long the mountain way
We two have walked with bleeding feet ;

But now across the sunlit plains,
Through peaceful valleys green and fair,
With hills enough for far-off gains,
Shall we not walk, a happy pair ?

My heart is building night and morn
From all the wrecks that we have known,
From hopes and dreams that yet adorn
A highway safe, and all our own.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

OUR SISTER

OUR sister sleeps ere set of sun,
Her work has fallen from her hands ;
Enough of labor she has done —
Kind nature understands.

Speak softly of her many deeds
Of love and tenderness ;
Still mindful of our needs,
And eager to relieve and bless.

Our sister sleeps ! How like is she
To our dear mother gone before ;
Oh, hush ! Weep not so bitterly,
For love is love forevermore.

THE POEMS OF

WHAT I WOULD DO FOR THEE

NOW what would I do for thee ?
A deed so openly great
That angels would wait
Beside the pearly gate
To honor and welcome me ?

This thing that I do for thee
Is humble and unknown :
While the trumpets are blown
I watch in the dark alone
Where foes encompass me.

But the day will rise for thee
When a good desired long
Will come to thee like a song
To the lips of a poet strong —
“ And this has she done for me ! ”

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

BY PERVERSION

ALL that we dreamed that he might be,
Behold, he has attained to-day ;
Our vision glows a verity,
But oh ! how devious was the way.

Perverse at every cross and turn !
Contrariwise he sought the goal
By means that once he could but spurn
With all the fervor of his soul.

THE POEMS OF

THE WOMAN IN THE CORN

I SAW her busy with the hoe,
A brown-clad figure in the corn,
That stretched away row after row,
That she had traveled since the morn.

Before my mind a mansion rose
With gleaming pillars, stately towers ;
What tricks of trade the owner knows
Who made his millions in three hours !

Yet with a liberal hand he gives
What speeds full many a worthy cause,
And on his neighbors' lips he lives
A man who loves his country's laws.

But yonder from that field of corn,
The corn on which his gain was made,
I see that toiler gaunt and worn,
Walk down his marble colonnade.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

INDIVIDUAL JUSTICE

“**W**E cannot wait,” they said ;
 “ ’Tis but a single man.”
And on the Power sped
 To keep its chosen plan.

Yet that one man became
 A bar across the path
As high as Heaven’s name,
 And hot as Heaven’s wrath.

THE POEMS OF

SONG

COME, O come !
It is the month of June,
Full-orbed the silver moon ;
The snowy lilies on the lake
Are all alert, awake,
O Love, for thy dear sake.
Come, O come !

Come, O come !
The shining veil of day
At last is drawn away ;
And in the balmy night
We tread the spirit's height,
Clad in immortal light.
Come, O come !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LET IT PASS

WHEN a man has done thee wrong,
Let it pass :

Briefer than the summer grass
Or the sparrow's song
Are the deeds of evil done
Under the impartial sun.

Evil—'tis a seeming thing !

Let it pass

Like the shadow on the grass,
While the tendrils cling
To the good, that cannot know
Either hurt or overthrow.

THE POEMS OF

SURRENDER

HAVE I not done what I could do ?
Now take the lines, whoever will ;
I drove the robber passes through,
I crossed the lightning-riven hill —
Now take the lines, whoever will.

My panting steeds are good
For any length of road ;—
(Drive softly through the wood,
Oh ! softly by my love's abode.)
My foaming bays are eager still ;
Now take the lines, whoever will.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

DIVINE CARE

O WONDROUS are thy ways :
The plant proclaims thy power,
Anew appears thy praise
In every fragile flower.

All creatures in thy thought
Are held with tender care ;
Thy love enfolds them, though unsought,
As amply as the air.

A fragile plant am I
To alien soil transferred,
And half I fear to die,
By change so deeply stirred.

Yet thou who for a weed
Dost care with tenderness,
Shalt thou not know my need
And comfort me and bless ?

THE POEMS OF

I LAY ME HOLD OF THEE!

I LAY me hold of Thee!
Thou art for me
And waiting for my grasp.
I lay me hold of Thee,
And feel thy answering clasp.
I rise from mine entangling free,
Achieving in my liberty
Along with Thee, O God, along with thee!
With hostile forces long
I strove, and spent with wrong
I turned at last to Thee,
The righteous verity.

Oh! grasping thee I found
Adjustment far and near;
My segment grew a round,
My faith cast out intrusive fear;
For am I not secure with Thee,
Achieving in my liberty
Thy work that sets the people free!

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

INCREASED TRUST

I TRUSTED thee—now shall I trust thee more?
Ah me! the fading shore! the fading shore!
The lights grow dim —
I lean across the vessel's rim;
I fear the deep below,
And yet the stars above me glow:
Almighty God, hold thou me to the course —
Retreat—that were disgrace, remorse,—
Hold thou me to the course!
The chartered way that others go —
O God! it closes—let me rise
To be deserving of thy far surprise,
Thy sunlit isles, thy ports
Where wealth, uncounted wealth resorts —
Oh! let my courage rise
That I may know thy far surprise.

THE POEMS OF

A COMMON PRAYER

I DO not come to ask
Some blessing past the common sight,
Some vision rapt and rare,
Reserved for saintly anchorite.

I ask but that I know
My fellow man without delay ;
That I discern the friend,
And mark the foe when far away.

I ask but that I feel
Whatever message Nature brings :
Responsive to the dawn,
And to the song the throstle sings.

This wisdom do I ask
From thy unbounded treasure store —
O, hark ! thy swift reply :
“ All this, my child, and always more.”

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

How could I guess who asked
For prudent gift and earthly things,
That to all these thy love,
Like a pervading fragrance clings !

My common prayer, O God,
Has reached thy throne of dazzling light ;
And through my earth-born clay
I feel the heavenly visions smite.

THE REFORMER

GROPING on my way I went
Seeking still some truth afar,
Till at last the East was rent
By the rising of a star.

In its radiance I saw
Meaning in my troubled past ;
For the underlying law
To the surface came at last.

He who finds a cause, a lord,
Leads no more a filching rout ;
Ordered troops with gun and sword,
Aiming for the last redoubt.

THE POEMS OF

Life I used to love and prize —
Now a force whereby some good
To its rightful place may rise,
Honored, loved, and understood.

Sigh for me who wills to sigh
For the losses I sustain
While my years in strife go by,
That to many seem but vain.

Call our roll from Nazarine
Down to Lincoln's warring day —
Ah! the glory in between,
And the ever-upward way!

Oh! the vision high and clear
That enchants, allures me on,
Yet to many shall appear
Like the breaking of the dawn!

Come, then, combat, come what will,
All my soul is in the fray;
Through the marshes, o'er the hill
While the unseen bugles play.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

“LET MY PEOPLE GO”

“**L**ET my people go ! ”
Said Jehovah to the king,
“To the desert worshipping.”
“Of Jehovah naught I know,”
Answered Pharaoh in his scorn ;
And he bade the toilers worn
Gather here and there the straw —
Still the tale of bricks is law.

“ Let my people go ! ”
Shall Jehovah speak in vain ?
He will cleave the sea in twain ;
He will make all Egypt know
Through his miracles tenfold
Who by Aaron’s mouth has told
Message Pharaoh shall obey
Till the cry, “ Away ! Away ! ”

“ Let my people go ! ”
Listen all who claim to be
Children of the promise free,
All who tread the earth below,

THE POEMS OF

Yielding up the only son,
Crying still, "Thy will be done"—
Slaves and exiles for a time,
Then deliverance sublime!

OUR PRESENT HELP

WHEN dangers close us all around,
When truth for which our souls have
striven
Is trodden down and shouts resound,
Shall we escape then, panic-driven?
The undefeated God,
Who in a clod
Did breathe a soul divine—
His voice our fear has riven,
And formed us into line.

Our hearts would melt in doubt away,
Did we not know who holds the banner
That floats for justice full and clear
To men of every creed and manner.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Our God advances still
Beyond the will
Of men who seek their own —
Behold his floating banner
On heights unscaled, unknown !

Let fraud and craft surround our door,
Let devils watch our coming, going ;
They force us but to strive the more
To bring our spirits into showing,
To grip with all our might,
The changeless right,
To follow Him who leads,
His eager trumpets blowing,
True men to valiant deeds.

Though earthly losses may befall,
Our name and goods from us be taken,
Though girt about by prison wall,
Our faith shall aye remain unshaken :
Our God in whom we trust,
Whose cause is just,
From hidden deep and height
Will forces rouse, awaken
To battle for the right.

THE POEMS OF

ARM ME WITH LOVE

ARM me with love, O Son of God,
Thou who wert love in human guise;
Defenceless as the crumbling clod,
Else I confront the armed emprise.

For weapons men invent, provide,
What can they in stress avail?
Alas! the treacherous arms of pride
Return on him who would assail.

Equipped with love shall I not know
The perfect courage that maintains
The fight until the prostrate foe
Beholds the truth that lives and reigns!

Arm me with love, again I pray;
I have no battle of my own;
For Thee, with Thee, I dare the fray,
The victory is all Thine own.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

DIVINE HELP

ALONE, alone, I seemed to be !
My servile spirit could not see
The mountains full of horses fleet,
Of chariots in glowing heat.

O Son of God, I heard thee pray —
The darkness fell from me away ;
I saw thy hosts, I heard their shout,
And all my fears were put to rout.

Now welcome combat, since I know
Who helps me to oppose the foe ;
Thy cause, of victory secure,
Shall I not hazard and endure !

I hear them rally to my need,
The warriors of immortal breed ;
I, too, take on immortal traits,
And lose my earth-born loves and hates.

THE POEMS OF

O help Divine, encircling me !
O radiant army that I see !
I beat no more the air—I fight
Endued with all Jehovah's might.

THE SONG OF LOVE

WHY do ye sing from age to age,
Of love, and love alone ?
No other impulses of life
Have ye poor singers known ?

We keep this theme the ages through,
Because the song of love
Includes the depths that yawn below,
The Heights that soar above.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

FAITH AND REASON

FAITH reached a height and sank again
With clutching hands, with slipping feet,
To that vast plain where vulgar men
O'er vulgar things converse, compete.

"'Twas a delusion and a dream,
The rocky height, the eagle's nest,
The prospect over vale and stream,"
Said Faith, her hands upon her breast.

Then Reason caught her whisper low,
Looked keenly, and in answer said,
"The mountain marks, to all who know,
Are on thee even foot to head."

THE POEMS OF

REJECTED AND BETRAYED

REJECTED and betrayed, my Saviour went
To Calvary beneath his burden bent
To perish on the tree
And mark the way for me
That I must travel if I too would know
The victory of love in final throe.

I used to stand beneath the cross and gaze
Upon his cruel death with sad amaze —
Oh! this he did for me,
This death upon the tree!
And thus at second hand I thought to win
Deliverance from all the hurt of sin.

I knew the while Barabbas went his way,
The hapless travelers to rob and slay;
But I—what could I do,
Held by that awful view?
And yet at times across my spirit smote
From coming combat a terrific note.—

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Rejected and betrayed ! O Christ, at last
I know the way ; I see the lots are cast
 For raiment I have worn ;
 I hear the hiss of scorn ;
O Christ, at last to be indeed like thee
Exalted—saved upon the curséd tree !

DE PROFUNDIS

NOT for release I pray —
 Oh, deepen thou the pain
 Until the murmur slain
Dies on our lips away ;

Until the soul intense
 Awakes to meet the strain,
 The soul that conquers pain,
And smiles at time and sense.

Not for release I call —
 Let us not writhe in vain,
 But perfect thou the pain,
Lest we should forfeit all.

THE POEMS OF

O, THE IMPARTIAL CHRIST!

O THE impartial Christ !
Who questions not what we may be,
As, groveling in our misery,
We seek him, groping to his feet,
Our refuge and our sole retreat.
O, the impartial Christ !

O, the impartial Christ !
To him the king and beggar kneel,
And through their broken being feel
The tides of healing ebb and flow,—
The touch that love alone can know.
O, the impartial Christ !

O, the impartial Christ !
Our sin has made us in his sight
All equal in our wretched plight.
He lifts us, lo ! his brothers we,
Heirs to his royal destiny.
O, the impartial Christ !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

COMPLICITY

THE garments at my willing feet,
The witnesses have laid ;
There falls a cruel hail of stone
On Stephen unafraid.

The saint is dead and none will say,
“The man was slain by Saul,”—
But lo ! my conscience casts me out
Beyond the city wall.

What matters it that hands refrain,
When hearts have cast the stone ?
Forgive me, Lord, as if thy saint
Were slain by me alone.

THE POEMS OF

GOD IS GOOD

ALMOST I had forgotten
That God is very good.
His punishments are kindness
By us misunderstood.

Each day I wonder, wonder,
At love in some new wise —
O God, how shall I fathom
The depths of thy surprise?

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE CHANGEFUL DAYS GO BY

THE changeful days go by ;
One thing unchanged for aye —
My need of thee.

Hushed is the song of spring,
The rose a withered thing,
Stay thou by me.

The summer days are here,
Of golden grain the fields are clear ;
I need thee still.

What seasons yet are mine,
Thou presence all divine,
Their voidness fill.

THE POEMS OF

AFTER THE MARTYRDOM

I THREW a stone or two ; you know
They all were throwing stones ;
The air seemed full of missiles, dust,
Of hisses, shouts, and groans.

My stone—it hardly struck the wretch,
Upon the edge I stood ;
In front were men of higher rank,
And rated sane and good.

Once he did turn his bleeding face,—
I feared to look at me —
Then up to heaven he gazed and caught
Light from eternity.

That glowing countenance—O, Sir,
I stole abashed away ;
'Twas but a single stone I flung,
And yet alack ! the day.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THY PRESENCE

SINCE I at length have learned to go
To sacred courts nor there require
A priest whose lips are touched with fire,
Thy eloquence I feel and know.

I seek thy house to meet with thee ;
While song and speech may prove an aid,—
Who puts his faith in them, dismayed
Shall often from thy presence flee.

But who find thee are well content :
Whate'er the means of worship lack,
A charm is there that draws them back
Where that seraphic hour was spent.

Thy presence, Lord, is all we need,
And that is nevermore denied ;
“ Abide in me.” Yea, we abide,
And on thy life unseen we feed.

THE POEMS OF

WHOM DOES THE GIANT FEAR ?

NOW, whom does the giant fear,
The giant that lives on the edge of the
wood ?

The priest or the clown ?

They both disappear,

And gulping them down,

He mutters, " Good ! "

The child that came for violets,

He swallows without regrets.

And the warrior men honored as brave —

He finds in that maw a grave.

Now, whom does he fear

All through the changing year ?

Ah ! the scholar and poet, these twain,

May walk in the wood in sun and rain,

And the giant will tremble and hide,

And yield them the forest so wide ;

For they have a charm

His wrath to disarm.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

MY GIFT

TO his Maker's throne
Each his gift must bring,—
I have but a song to sing.
 Gifts of flock and field,
 Toil of hand and brain,—
I have but a simple strain.
 What was given to me
That I needs must bring,—
I have but a song to sing.
 Yet, O Maker, hark !
 In my native troll
 Are the echoes of my soul.

THE POEMS OF

A TALE FOR THE CRITIC

BEFORE we criticise
A life or work of art,
'Twere well if first we learned
This ancient tale by heart :—

When Rome with Persia warred,
(’Twas in Galerius’ day,)
What treasures of the East
The Romans bore away !

In Persian tent and field
The spoils were strewn around ;—
Of shining leather lay
A bag upon the ground ;

A soldier’s prize ! ’Twill serve
His purpose well, no doubt ;
But first he turned the pearls
As useless pebbles out !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE POINT OF VIEW

HE wandered east, he wandered west,
Ah, me! what scenes he saw!
But aye he said in discontent,
“The picture has its flaw!”

She dwelt alone in dismal spot,
Yet said each morn, “How fair!
For her, pure soul, the thought of God
Thrilled through the earth and air.

Aye he who takes the form for soul,
His heart is ill at ease;
Who sees the soul within the form,
Most lowly things may please.

THE POEMS OF

POETIC LICENSE

SHE sings of nightingales ;
Yet never one doth fly
Through all that western sky.

She sings of love and loss ;
And I suspect that they
Are continents away.

A MYSTIC SONG

O I love a mystic song
, As a bird loves the air,
As a fish loves the sea,
As a hound loves the hare !

O, I love a mystic song,
And I need no paraphrase,
As the chamois needs no guide
O'er the mountain ways.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LIFE FOLLOWS SONG

MY heart is awake and sings
With the morning lark.
We have slept how long ! how long !
Through the lonely dark.

My heart is awake and sings
And will build its nest,
And feel the wonderful life a-thrill
Under the mother-breast ;

For my heart is awake and sings,—
Life follows after song !
By a law that cannot fail
Through the ages long.

THE POEMS OF

THE PEARL OF SONG

HOW many fathoms deep
Down in the sea
Must the diver go
Who dives for thee?

Farewell to sky,
Farewell to shore,
To find a single pearl
On ocean's floor.

ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN A SINGER

ALL my life I've been a singer ;
All my life I've been a bringer
Of the vital notes that cling
To the soul of everything.
Now behold me, old and poor ;
Yet the music shall endure
Shall draw the sky to stoop and fold
Me in robes of rose and gold.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

BEAUTY IS NEVER AFAR

BEAUTY is never afar :
I went in the garden ;
I gathered up my brown-checked gingham
apron,
And plucked from the rank vines the glowing
tomatoes ;
I paused by the peach-tree
And added a few to my burden.

BEFORE A PAINTING

I THINK he painted it for me,
Not for great dames who gaze,
Upon the rural scene and give
In courtly language praise.

I think he painted it for me
Because I know these lowly ways :
The peasant blood within my veins,
O Master, speaks thy praise.

THE POEMS OF

HEART SICKNESS

“**H**OW comes heart sickness, dost thou know ? ”
Not through some unexpected blow,
But through a process long and slow,
And lo ! the heart is sick and sore,
And comfort seems a vanished lore.

“ How does heart sickness pass away,
Tell me, O friend, if thou canst say ? ”
Through love’s slow healing day by day,
Through Nature’s touch, through faith in One
Who watches life through shade and sun.

“ ROUGHNESS ”

“ **O** WE’VE bran,” said Mrs. Western,
“ But a cow must have beside
Roughness, or before you know it,
She’ll be either dead or dried.”

“ ‘ Roughness ’ ? do they mean to beat her ? ”
Thought the gentle Mrs. Maine ;
But her husband laughing told her,
“ Hay, alfalfa, millet, cane ! ”

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

A FARTHER EAST

THEY scorned him for his Western mood,
They on Atlantic's brim,
They knew not that a farther East
Burned in the soul of him ;

An East that from his birth he knew-
O, sacred Alps that rise
Through childhood dream, through tale and
song
To cleave the lonely skies !

Who through two hundred years must grope
To find the Old World's heart,
Its garnered sense of life and lore,
Its deep impulse of art,

It ill becomes them to deride
The man whose pulses bear
A music that has died away
Upon the alien air.

THE POEMS OF

MY MISTAKE

I SAW a coming grief and cried,
“Not this, not this, I pray!”
It vanished, and a vaster grief
Cast darkness on my way,

Till that first grief became a light
That one might gladly hail,
As after sunset we rejoice
In even moonlight pale.

PRUNING

A WINTER went in his vineyard
And clipped the leaves away;—
The bashful grapes saluted
The monarch of the day.

And the mildew like a serpent,
It glided out of sight,
While purple and sweet the clusters
Grew in the summer light.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LET US ABIDE IN LOVE

LET us abide in love !
'Tis our constructive power.
It builds our fort and fame,
It rears our hall and tower.

Let us abide in love !
The earth is fresh and fair
With flower and with song
While love pervades the air.

Let us abide in love !
Nor let the heart decay,
Whatever strength of life
The years may take away.

THE POEMS OF

PREMONITION

THE robin knows that spring is near,
He needs no chart to mark the year —
The robin knows.

The violet feels the coming spring —
O, sense profound in bud and wing!
The violet feels.

O human heart, shalt thou not be
Aware of coming destiny,
O human heart!

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LIVING BEAUTY

I SAID I will let my life be
As bare as an autumn tree,
I will not endeavor
With fingers clever
To fasten a leaf here and there
To shut out the sunlight and air.

O, true is the earth below,
And true is the sky above :
A tree that is able to grow,
And a soul that is able to love,
We may trust the long winter through,
For beauty is certain as God is true.

THE POEMS OF

LOST HARMONY RESTORED

ART thou ill at ease?
Look about and find
Something that has need
Of thy heart and mind.

And that need performed
Shall thy solace be;
Surely it restores
Thy lost harmony.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

AT HOME

L OUISE remains at home,
Though friends and neighbors go
To see the wondrous fair
Where all the World 's on show.

They tell her of the sights —
“It must be fine indeed,”
She says and sews away
As if for urgent need.

Her face is like the dawn,
And still she sews and sews
Such tiny frocks ! nor cares
Who stays at home or goes.

THE POEMS OF

MY BRIDGE

I CAME upon the stream —
Alas ! the swollen flood ;
I had no boat to cross,
I had no plank of wood.

Then blew a kindly wind —
Across the stream there lay
A mighty oak, and I
Walked o'er without delay.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

WHEN WILL THEY COME?

I WEARY of these alien ones,
When will they come, my own?
Whom I shall know and understand
By every touch and tone.

Oh, sick at heart am I of these
Who pause for argument,
Who lack the common blood that feels
The heart of the intent.

Bring me mine own, O God of life,
Call them to me from far;
My spirit woos them to my side
From thy most distant star.

THE POEMS OF

A SONG OF EGYPT

(Lebanon, Ill., is in that part of the state known as Egypt.)

“**W**HAR you done a libbin’ now ? ”
Way down in Egypt ;
Makin’ bricks widouten straw,
Groanin’ under Pharaoh’s law,
Way down in Egypt,
Way down.

Here I toils among my foes,
Way down in Egypt,
Whar de stranger am deir prey —
(Makes deir libbin’ dat-a-way,)
Way down in Egypt,
Way down.

An’ I see de signs ob hope
Way down in Egypt !
Hear dat Moses drawin’ nigh,
Land ob Canaan by and by.—
Farewell to Egypt,
Farewell !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LIGHTEN YOUR SHIP

LIGHTEN your ship when Euroclydon comes,
Lighten your ship !

Cast in the ocean your tackling and wheat,
Fling to the billows your vesture and meat.

Lighten your ship when Euroclydon comes,
Lighten your ship !

Riches that cost you the blood in your veins —
Forth in the sea !

Things that by gift and by usage were dear,
In the wild waters they plunge, disappear.

Life, oh ! for life will you lavish your gains
On the mad sea.

Lighten your ship when Euroclydon comes,
Lighten your ship !

Life is for love, and the value of love

Heaven alone has the reckoning of :

Lighten your ship when Euroclydon comes,
Lighten your ship.

THE POEMS OF

NOT TWICE

SOME things will come again –
The lightning, storm, and rain ;
But *never* shall we know
Again *that* depth of pain.

For you and I, we drank
Down to the dregs the cup ;
Not twice between the thieves
Are victims offered up.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

LOSS AND GAIN

OF gains that we applaud
I think with little pleasure ;
For still my losses seem
To me my chiefest treasure ;
For still through losses came
The spirit's larger vision ;
The wavering will attained
The granite of decision.

Let prudent merchants, then,
Compute in their own fashion ;
Another mode prevails
Where love is ruling passion :
Oh, losses I have known !
Oh, losses that await me !
These only shall at last
In Eden reinstate me.

THE POEMS OF

CONSOLATION

ONE day a friendship died :
No wrong was done ;
It simply ceased to be
Beneath the sun.

One day a friendship new
To one was born ;
That ancient grief became
A thing outworn.

Say what we will, the child
Upon the breast
Consoles us for the one
In dreamless rest.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE NEAREST DUTY

I SAID that I would do
The works of love alone,—
And in my breast my heart
Remained as hard as stone.

I said, Now I will do
Whatever comes to do.
And lo ! my stony heart
Was molten through and through.

THE POEMS OF

A SONG OF ACADEMIC LIBERTY

ARISE, who bend o'er song and story,
Who search for truth in her retreat;
What profits all your learned glory
If freedom suffer a defeat?
Arise and listen! Down the ages
The shackles on the thinker ring;
And what ye read on placid pages
Was once condemned by priest and king.

O ye who guard the sacred portals
With vigilance of heart and brain,
Through which the troop of the immortals
Comes ever with their glistening train —
O thinker, teacher, seer, bestowing
Such guardian service, shall ye be
The slaves of tyrants all unknowing
The highest gifts are from the free?

Shall ye not see a Hamlet's passion
Portrayed upon the tragic stage?
Must truth be right to you in fashion
When it is duly stamped with age?

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Shall ye not dare condemn the writer
Who writes from vanity and greed ?
And dare to be the public smiter
Of men who mount by evil deed ?

Of old did Galileo mutter
As he recanted, " Yet it moves " ?
Ye, too, below your breath must utter
What blinded custom disapproves.
O ye, for truth who groan and travail,
Shall ye be driven to obey
The barren slaves who basely cavil
At life and life's imperious way ?

For you no sword that cleaves asunder,
And not for you the piercing ball ;
But eloquence has still her thunder,—
The people are the open hall.
The law that underlies our nation
Is still to tyranny a foe ;
And to your help comes all creation
When once ye are in freedom's throe.

THE POEMS OF

“NO ROOM IN THE INN ”

“The Navarre has every modern convenience. No children.”—*Newspaper Advertisement.*

“**Y**OU saw the pair at the door
That to-night I turned away ? ”
The landlord asked his wife
In Herod’s regal day.

“I saw the pair indeed,
And right were you to deny ;
For an inn is never a place
Where one should be born or die ! ”

“So I thought,” he made response ;
“The stable is open for them.”
And there ere the dawn was born
The Babe of Bethlehem.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

A CHRISTMAS RONDEL

REJOICE! the Christ is born! —
“ Ah! in a time afar,
 Beneath a Roman czar,
To grieve and mourn forlorn;
For him the scourge and thorn,
 The shame at Pilate's bar —”
Rejoice! the Christ is born,
 Of love the avatar!
What power has Herod's scorn
 Or Peter's lie to mar
 The bright and morning star!
Rejoice! the Christ is born
To thee this winter morn.

THE POEMS OF

THE CRAFTY VIOLINIST

(This story is told of Ole Bull and Erickson.)

THEY played as lads together,
But drifted far apart ;
And each became a master
In Science and in Art.

A prince among inventors
The older one became ;
In music won the younger
A far-resounding name.

And after years of parting
Their pathways crossed again.
How strong and deep the friendship
Of two victorious men !

And often to his concerts
The wizard of the bow
Implored his friend's attendance,
Who ever answered, " No ! "

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Because no taste for music
Was in his nature born,
And time in vain amusement
For him were time forlorn.

Not thus the sweet musician
Was baffled by the plea :
His violin for mending
He sent in craftily.

Then to a skilful workman
His friend the task assigned,
Nor dreamed a wily purpose
Was in the player's mind.

He came himself, the master,
His bow beneath his arm ;
He chatted while he tested
If well repaired the harm.

He drew, as half unconscious,
Across the strings the bow,
Nor heeded how the workmen
Stood in a gaping row.

THE POEMS OF

Then, as if he remembered,
He checked himself and prayed
A pardon for his "fiddling"
In which by use betrayed.

"Play on!" his friend insisted;
"I knew not what I said
When to the touch of music
I vowed my soul was dead!"

"Who were the pair?" you question;
You know them long and well,
But that you may remember,
Their names I gladly tell:

John Erickson, the builder
Who made the Monitor,
And Ole Bull, the player
Of many a witching score.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

BURNS

O BURNS, sweet bard of love !
Let them who love resort to thee,
As to the linden flies the bee.

O Burns, sweet bard of love !
Who lack in love have need of thee,
As of the linden has the bee.

O Burns, sweet bard of love !
Thou linden lane of poesy ;
The human heart, the hungry bee.

THE POEMS OF

EUGENE FIELD

WHO of Krinken sang the song,
Sun-child that the ocean long
Wooped, and won to his embrace,
And the summer of his face
Made a summer in the sea,
Where with maiden Nis went he —
Ah ! the singer in the deep
Sank away in sleep.

Sun-child must a singer be :
Warmer is the hoary sea —
Warmer for that golden ray
Is the ocean's heart for aye ;
And upon the lonely shore
Winter reigns forevermore.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

ENDURE

ENDURE! endure! a little while
May bring the issue fair and great.
Let no impatience thee beguile
Of that for which thy soul doth wait.

Endure! endure! nor fail to strive.
Above thee bend the powers unseen
To keep thy courage still alive,
To fight thy breathing spells between.

THE POEMS OF

READJUSTMENT

LET it not grieve thee when the throng
With which thou hast companioned long
Falls from thee in a sudden way,
As leaves drop from the autumn spray ;

It means another throng must come —
Hark ! to the far recruiting drum !
New comrades call to noble fight,
To larger conquests for the right.

Respond ! respond ! and from the mind
Expel all wrong, all thoughts unkind ;
Join with the host that brings to thee
New life, new faith, new liberty.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Sonnets

TO-MORROW

“**T**O-MORROW I will do just thus and so,
And lose this haunting sense of misery.”
The morrow came, and I was glad and free,
And all the tasks that I had set in row,
All of a sudden I did let them go,
And bade the living day to govern me.
What wonders new ! what strange placidity !
A world so near me that I did not know !

O, artificial life, hard evermore,
Depart and let spontaneous force arise,
A force that has a law beyond our eyes,
Untainted by the human grind and greed.
To that I yield, and ever new the shore,
A rapture every note—a flower each weed.

THE POEMS OF

SUNSETS

I MARKED the sunsets all the summer through,
And in their flames of glory bathed my soul,
As bathes the flower itself at night in dew,
At morn with fragrance sweeter to unroll.
Responsive to the sunset's splendor, I,
Who in that vision asked for nothing more,
Dreamed not that gracious nature, standing by,
A human gift reserved for me in store,

That, when my soul was level to its height,
She would reveal, and, smiling down on me,
Entreat me to accept the greater boon,
As one who, faithful to the dying light,
Is worthy of the dawn eye cannot see,
A light beyond the sun and stars and moon.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

AT WORSHIP

OF late I listen to the sacred word
With all my soul awake, alert that I
May lose no syllable. But half I heard
The message in the careless days gone by ;
But now so earnest has my life become,
So frail am I to meet the combat stern,
I can but sit in expectation dumb
That from God's manual some hint I learn

To lead me safely on. O word of truth,
Unfold thy mystery to my delight,
Be of the larger life perpetual sooth ;
So shall I walk by faith and not by sight,
And in serenity reproach endure,
Since in eternal praise I rest secure.

THE POEMS OF

THY WILL BE DONE

THY will be done. I choose it joyously,
Not as a slave that must. What seemeth
good

To me, perhaps is ill, misunderstood.
Thou only knowest what develops me
Like yonder heavenward-striving tree :
It utilizes its environment ;
Its mighty roots are darkly downward sent,
Its top to all the sun's influence free.

Thy will be done ! I, too, will drink the cup,
E'en though in pain I pray that it may pass ;
For still the heartless priest and jeering mass
Through sacrifice are moved and lifted up ;
And whoso grips some truth, with it achieves
The courage to maintain, to die with thieves.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

INTERPRETATION

O LOVE, thou hast interpreted to me
The poets whom I read for many years,
And to whose songs I gave both smiles and tears ;
I seemed a child that looks upon the sea
Responding half in wonder, half in glee ;
But now the verse—its inner sense appears,
The soul that all the body fair endears,
And binds me to perpetual fealty.

O love, I knew thy treasures were supreme,
But this is wondrous that the key to art
Fits in the casket of the human heart ;
That feeling is the central force and fire,
The fact, while all else is a shadowy dream,
A mist that mounts in sunlight to expire.

THE POEMS OF

LOVE'S VICTORY

WHEN Portia won the trial in the court,
Then love was victor over selfish gain :
For him the argosies traverse the main
To gather wealth from many an alien port ;
For him on the Rialto men consort
In eager competition to obtain
The ducats for his need—all traffic's pain
Is but to furnish love in proper sort.

O love, for thee we toil, for thee we die ;
Thy smile, however late, is recompense
For every labor, every hazard run ;
To perish in the life-sustaining sun
Is better than in darkness long and dense,
Amid the pale and timid hosts to lie.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

O, RADIANT LIGHT OF LOVE!

I SOUGHT no counsel from the sons of men,
But silently the struggle ran its course :
I sank to deeps beneath despair, remorse,
To rise and sink again and yet again ;
The world that men esteem so fair and good,
Of all the joys of sense the ample source,
Was burnt to ashes in the flaming force
To which my life became as resinous wood.

But from the deeps I rose, from ashes gray
I sprang, no more to wave and flame a prey :
The counsel from within and from above
Has led to thee, O, radiant light of love,
And now, responsive to the wooing day,
Behold the life I almost doubted of.

THE POEMS OF

PERSONALITY

LOVE comes and leaves us nevermore the same ;
It is the chisel's blow that sets us free —
The statue of our personality
Behold ! The wall of public praise and blame
Is left behind as if an empty frame :
We stand alone, enabled now to see
That love achieves this silent victory
For all who love in deed as well as name.

Distinct and clear and free at last from all
The semblance of support, the life acquires
The sense of earth down to her inward fires,
The sense of heaven beyond the summit tall —
The vision that surmounts the final wall
Where soul to soul responds in pure desires.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

WITHOUT HASTE

THERE is no haste in love : it has all time,
And speed that mocks the swiftness of the
light ;

No loss it knows, nor need to expedite
Its message ; and, secure in faith sublime,
It spreads no net, it straws no snaring lime.
What need has it for wiles that to the night
Belong ? It is the sum of human right,
And unassailable as in its prime.

O heart impatient, fearful lest delay
May hazard that which is of dateless years,
Let love but have an undisputed sway ;
There is more wisdom in its silent tears,
Than in all maxims that the traitor fears
Have whispered to thy pain the livelong day.

THE POEMS OF

IN THE FOREST

TO breathe into these lines the spirit calm
That rests upon this forest dense and old,
Were fit return for all the healing balm
That here I found without the cost of gold ;
For I, a creature worn with many a toil,
And sick at heart with doubtings manifold,
I wandered here, I blent into the wold,
And like a tree drew vigor from the soil.

O forest, fare thee well ! Again I turn
To human scenes ; and yet between us twain
A bond exists : the memory of me
Is thy possession, wrought into thy grain ;
And I, how oft when city pavements burn,
Shall feel the shade, the atmosphere of thee !

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

IN OPEN AIR

“*Flieh’ ! Auf ! Hinaus in’s weite Land !*”—*Goethe.*

IN open air, there am I brave and free,
And liefest there would I await, receive
A message weird and wondrous to believe :
As to that English king, it seems to me,
Less danger comes to men from sorcery
In open field than palaces inside,—
Let Augustine, the royal hall denied,
On Thanet’s isle expound his mystery.

In open air my spirit urges, Go !
The earth, if green or brown, will banish care ;
The spell that narrow walls about me wove,
The winds afar in mockery will blow,
While I, serenely glad and unaware,
Imbibe the strength for which I vainly strove.

THE POEMS OF

THE POET TO THE READER

I

I SEEK for thee: there are no deeps, no heights
I would not cross for thee to whom my song
Is life and power. When thy emotions throng
From inner fountains that the worldling slights,
Then, if a note of mine should make thee strong
To vindicate thy bosom's sacred rights —
Ah ! that were joy to match the high delights
That thrill the singer in the hour of song.

There is no melody that can endure
Except it save a soul. To win reward
So great is worth all agony, all scorn ;
To fail thereof—far better never born
Were that vain wretch whom jingling words
allure
To sell, Iscariot-like his Christ and Lord.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE READER TO THE POET

II

MY soul O poet, goes in search of thee
Who comest unto me with message high ;
Fear not the world's neglect, I shall not die
Till thou hast sung thy secret into me :
Two souls that seek each other earnestly
May all the jeering, flippant world defy ;
For on such search the deep foundations lie
Of all that rises into victory.

Sing on ! While air is here to bear away
Thy notes, the ample argument of song
Is thine. The strains that to thyself belong
I shall in season hear, since I obey
Emotion's law, from which all songs arise
As vapors mounting to the summer skies.

THE POEMS OF

THE SONNET

THE heart of Bruce, the noble Douglas bore
In combat with the Saracenic foe ;
He flung the precious casket far before
And wrought the Moslem rout and overthrow :
For still the heart of Bruce, renowned of yore,
Its ancient valor kept and fiery glow,
And where it fell amid the combat's roar,
There lay the Moors in mortal anguish low.

And thou, O sonnet, art the golden vase,
In which full many a poet locks his heart,
The heart that in the battle's fiercest place
Achieves a victory beyond all art ;
For still the heart retains its primal might
To put the foes of love and song to flight.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

RENUNCIATION

WHEN ruin seemed to close my life around
In waves of wild and overwhelming might,
There came a rock, a beckoning rock, in sight;
It rose from deeps serene because profound;
My drowning soul beheld it with delight;
“Saved! saved!” I cried. Against that lofty
rock
The waves may beat, they cannot merge or shock,
There shalt thou find, O soul of mine, respite.

And on that rescue-rock did I remain
Until my soul did larger rescue know:
No more a victim to the selfish floods,
I walk the garden where the lilies blow,
I feel the life within the growing buds,
And hear the bluebird warbling down the lane.

THE POEMS OF

PROGRESS

LONG years men trafficked on an ancient deep :
Here sailed their vessels rich in spice and ore,
In gleaming gems and silks that monarchs wore ;
From Araby, from Egypt, India, did they reap
The harvests of the mountain, plain, and vale,
The myrrh and corn, the figs and rice and wine,
While hidden lay the vast Pacific brine,
Unploughed by keel and unadorned by sail.

Oh ! slowly do we come to know the globe —
To-day through Panama we dig our way ;
O'er mind and matter is our boasted sway
Imperfect still, a pauper's dingy robe —
When shall we don the purple of a king,
And know to live, and, living, know to sing.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

VINDICATION

THY cause is just? Fear no detraction then;
Though thou art stung to pain by cruel speech,
By scoff, by silence of the better men;
Be thou unmoved, since time is apt to teach
The meaning of thine act, and vindicate
Thy justly chosen course. Malicious lies,
Insinuations—all the brood of hate,
Time can remove, whatever their disguise.

For righteousness is at the heart of all,
And of its triumph cannot fail. Who keeps
This faith speeds not upon detraction's call
To his defense; but more his being steep
In truth; for, in due season, at a bar
All men appear, not what they seem, but are.

THE POEMS OF

WAITING

I WAIT : there comes a time when naught remains
But to endure and wait ; and, in that pause,
That enforced idleness, the hidden cause
Of much illuding all my toil and pains
Is manifest. The force that silent reigns
Grows audible, the while the loud applause
That seemingly enacts, repeals the laws,
Is caught and lost in far and high refrains.

My life ascends to perfect harmony :
I am no more an isolated note, but part
Of a triumphant song, a rhapsody
That rises from all nature, through all man,
The fabric of a great musician's art,
Conceived in sacrifice Promethean.

Juvenile Verse

“MR. TEN MINUTES”

THERE once was a prince, and he always would
pray

For ten minutes more ;

Whenever too sleepy a word e'en to say,

He would hold up his hands in a comical way :

So “Mr. Ten Minutes,” the name that he bore.

The prince grew a man and a warrior bold

In African clime ;

But he tarried ten minutes !—His comrades have
told

How the Zulus came down like the wolf on the
fold :—

Life, honor, and all for ten minutes of time.

THE POEMS OF

WHEN BABY LEARNED TO WALK

WHEN Baby learned to walk
He went along the wall,
By tables and by chairs,
Afraid to get a fall.

I almost thought that he
Might have a coward heart,
And always with the boys
I'd have to take his part.

One afternoon when we
Were in the room alone,
He stepped out from that wall,
His eyes like diamonds shone,

And he could walk for good !
I tell you he's the kind ;
He waits, but just look out
When he's made up his mind.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE CRADLE SONG

MY mother sings a cradle song ;
I see no reason why !
For I am going now on five,
And maybe three feet high !

So soft and sleepy is the song
I almost close my eyes ;
It seems to me it must be made
Of all the lullabies.

THE POEMS OF

THE ENSIGN-BEARER OF FONTENOY

HAVE you heard of this valiant youth,
Cassibianca's mate ?

He trumpets to all the truth —
“Stand, whatever your fate.”

A line of his regiment fell,
And he on his horse alone,
Erect and immovable
As a statue carved of stone !

Not to flinch and still to hold
His standard up was all
That the ensign had been told,
And all that he could recall.

A dash, and his friends appear
And wrapping him in his flag
To the king with many a cheer
And many a word of brag !

“Lieutenant,” upon the spot
But that's nor here nor there ;
To stand in one's appointed lot
Is a fact for everywhere.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

MYRTLE'S SONG

“UP and up the marble steps!”
Little Myrtle sings;
Song, you know, has power to lend
To a climber wings.

And the “marble steps”—a hill
White with lime and clay,
That the little maiden climbs
On her schoolward way!

Once she heard a fairy-tale,—
Marble steps that shone;
Fairy she herself to change
Common mire and stone

Into marble, and forget
As she skips along,
All the steepness of the hill
In her fairy song.

THE POEMS OF

A BUSY SATURDAY

ONE Saturday when Alice
Was at our house to play,
It seemed that every person
Thought we were in the way.

We went out in the kitchen,
And begged to bake a cake ;
But cook said, " I'm too busy,
Go 'way for goodness sake ! "

We asked our Aunt Eugenia
To tell a fairy-tale.—
" I'm sorry, but my letters
Must go by early mail. "

Now, surely Sister Mabel
Will play a merry tune ;
She crocheted on and answered,
" Some other afternoon. "

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

We tried to make a seesaw
Beneath the maple-tree ;
But Grandpa said right sharply,
“Just let my lumber be !”

In Mother's room with dollies
We settled down to play ;
For there we found a welcome
That busy Saturday.

PRIMROSE HILL

ON Primrose Hill there is a store,
And there I bought to-day
A handsome carpet (made of moss)
And gave a leaf for pay.

On Primrose Hill the store belongs
To Alice, John, and Clair ;
Such bargains I have never known
At Field's or anywhere !

THE POEMS OF

SUDDEN HEALING

WITH solemn sigh a little maid
Sat by her dolly's bed :
" She's very sick ; I'm 'fraid she has
New money in her head.

" Her mother's sick besides," she said,
And heaved a deeper sigh :
" It's information of the heart,
And often people die."

Just then the doctor came with pills,—
He looked like brother Hugh —
And doll and mother in a flash
Were just as good as new.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE DEAREST OF ALL

THERE was a rag doll ;
It was clumsy and big,
No eyes to see with,
Nor a hair of a wig.

But the dearest of all
May's children five
Was the doll that came out
Of each trouble alive.

So, whatever you get
In China or France
To open its eyes,
To cry and to dance,

Just add a rag doll
To stand all the strain
Of play and parade,
Of sunshine and rain.

THE POEMS OF

THE THUNDER SIDE

A LITTLE boy and girl
One day together sat,
And from the window watched
The storm they wondered at.

Estella next the pane,
In sudden terror cried,
Whereon upspake Eugene,
“ I’ll take the thunder side.

“ IN THE CUSHION ”

THERE’S a little girl who sews.
When she makes her dolly’s clothes,
Then the needles disappear
From the cushion by the row ;
Yet if questioned, “ Where, my dear,
Are the needles ? ” she replies,
“ In the cushion ! ” and I fear
That some needles without eyes,
But with heads to make them wise,
Will her ladyship surprise.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

“OVER ONE AND UNDER TWO”

“OVER one and under two”
Is the braider’s law ;
Thus she makes a shining band
Of the golden straw.

“Over one and under two,”
On the left, the right ;
Seven strands are in the braid,
Seven hues, in the light.

“Over one and under two,”
Dampen, press, and sew :
There’s a hat to shield the curls
And the face below.

THE POEMS OF

A WONDERFUL BASKET

NOT of willow, not of straw,
Was the basket that I made;
Do you think you ever saw
Such an easy, pretty braid?

“Splints of hickory?”—O no!
Neither “rushes,” neither “cane”;
Burs together, row on row,
From the bur-dock in the lane.

Then I set it on my head,
As I saw old Dinah do;—
And I wished that I was dead
’Fore the combing half was through.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE INNKEEPER'S DAUGHTER

MY own dear father keeps the inn
In the town of Bethlehem ;
And pious guests are often there,
Who seek Jerusalem.

And once at evening came a pair —
“No room,” my father said,
Although I whispered very low,
“I’ll spare my little bed.”

My mother died when I was born ;
I saw her in the eyes
Of Mary as she stroked
My hair in mother-wise.

And all that night I dreamed and dreamed
Of a garden large and fair
Where children played, and mothers sat
With roses in their hair.

THE POEMS OF

I hurried out to feed my lamb
When it was hardly day ;—
And in our manger, O how sweet !
A little baby lay.

And men were there who looked as wise
As readers of the law ;
But just the mother and the child
Were all I really saw.

My own dear father keeps the inn
In the town of Bethlehem ;
And guests—but none like these—still come,
Who seek Jerusalem.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

WHERE DOES THE ICE GO ?

WHERE does the ice go to ?
The baby wished to know.

"It melts," says Aunt Lenore.

But still, "W'ere do it go?"

"See, yonder is the sun,
And when his eye so bright
Looks on the ice, it runs
To hide away from sight."

The baby laughs in glee,
Looks at the shining sun,
Then at the ice and says,
"Oo better 'gin to yun!"

THE POEMS OF

SLEEP, MY BABY, SLEEP

SLEEP, my baby, sleep.
The wind blows from the South
On baby's hair and mouth ;
Its breath is soft and cool ;
It sings of rest and sleep,
Of mosses rich and deep
Beside a forest pool.
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

Sleep, my baby, sleep.
Across the golden wheat
The wind blows low and sweet ;
It sings a pleasant song,
It tells of happy feasts
For man and bird and beasts
All the snowy winter long.
Sleep, my baby, sleep.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

SLUMBER SONG

TO Bylo land,
My baby, go!
There children stand
Hand in hand
And row on row
In the happy Bylo land.
Hush, my baby, go.
There the little Esquimau
From his home in the snow
Meets the little maid
From the palmy shade.
Hush, my baby, go.

Mates from every clime,
Waiting for your sleepy time —
“Come, O come,” they say,
“Come with us and play
In the happy Bylo land,
Where the children stand
Hand in hand
And row on row.”
Hush, my baby, go.

THE POEMS OF

A MAN OF MANY CLIMES

ONCE a man roved to and fro,
Wheresoe'er a man can go,
And to places you and I
Would be sure to hurry by.
Steam had borne him rapidly
Over land and over sea ;
And he caught—just think of it !
Even lightning by the bit,
And he drove that flashing steed
Till one trembled at the speed.
Oft he rode an elephant,
Or a camel in Levant ;
And Arabian horses ran
Fast from Jof to Ispahan.
Zebus drove him slowly on
Through the groves of cinnamon.
A jinrikishaw he hired,
And he said he never tired
Of the easy gait of man
In the Island of Japan.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

Dogs did draw him o'er the snow,
Driven by the Esquimau.
Why, this man of many lands,
Every tongue he understands,
So at once he's shaking hands,
With a Moslem or a Jew,
With a Frenchman or a Sioux,
And he grows so intimate —
More than I would like to state.
“What's the traveler's name?” you say.
Well, I learned it with dismay
When I wandered far from home
Through the ancient streets of Rome —
When I read on his valise
That he carries every trip —
“Property of Sir La Grippe.”
“Sir La Grippe,” he coolly said,
And I took at once to bed.

THE POEMS OF

Quatrains

TIME ENOUGH

SAY not, "The time is all too brief!"—
Eternity is thine;
Upon that trellis, leaf by leaf,
Ascends the human vine.

THE CRITIC

THE walls about his life,
They fell in crumbled heaps;
Now he has stones to throw
At every one who peeps.

PRIMAL NECESSITY

A LITTLE time to be alone
For quiet talk with God,
As needful to the soul for tone
As to the rose the sod.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

STRENUOUS LIFE

YOUR strenuous life no more can please —
My soul is weary of the phrase ;
I have great need of rest and ease,
Of peace beyond the blame and praise.

SUDDEN DEATH

IT fell like lightning from the skies ;
We huddled in a helpless heap,
Like shivering, storm-bewildered sheep —
O Death, how awful thy surprise !

A HOUSEHOLD PICTURE

A MOTHER going to and fro,
A fire in cheerful glow ;
A simple table spread,
A baby cooing in its bed.

AT DAWN

TO stand at dawn
And hear the sable curtains drawn,
While glory comes in view
Across the east and shimmers in its dew !

THE POEMS OF

PURSUIT

YOU wronged a man, and far away
You went, to see him nevermore !
You lived serene until the day
His friend stood knocking at your door.

PRIMROSES

SWEET primroses at fall of dew,
A silent strain
Of odor, form, and hue
That haunts the bluff and plain.

ELECTION DAY

WE drive ! Come Jeanne and little Rus ;
Let men uphold the state ;
We drive and let them fume and fuss,
Those masters of our fate.

“THE REAL THING”

I WOULD not paint a happiness
I have not known ;
Nor hew in marble a distress
That's not mine own.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

DESERT DWELLERS

I STRAYED into a desert place —
Oh ! what a group was there :
A lion of majestic grace,
A viper and a hare.

A NATURE FAKER

HE sat from Nature's life afar,
Applauding her from rose to star ;
The people, too, remote as he,
Applauded his tomfoolery.

ANTICIPATION

FOREVERMORE my thoughts go on
Beyond the present darkened way,
To tread the summits of the dawn
Where night in splendor dies away.

ARISE !

ARISE ! the morning's sword of light
Has smitten down rebellious haze ;
And hark ! caparisoned for fight,
Thy gallant charger champs and neighs.

THE POEMS OF

KANSAS SKIES

IF skies of Hellas moved her bards to sing
The songs that still adown the ages ring,—
O Kansas poets, lift to heaven your eyes ;
How rare must be the verse to match your skies !

MATERIALISM

WHY shouldst thou fear material trend ?
The mother earth is warm and true ;
All larger natures swerve and bend
From nether green to upper blue.

HIDDEN RESOURCES

WITH buttons off what shall we do ?
Of needles here is not a sign ;
But squeeze the cushion, and in view
Are needles plenty, coarse and fine.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

THE LITTLE ARMS

O DEAR ! the little arms
That draw us down to humble ways,
Secure from high alarms
We brood on childhood's holy days.

THE SOLUTION

HOW long I vexed myself to weigh
The difference 'twixt right and wrong :—
Then rang a Voice all must obey,
“ Drop thou thy weights and sing thy song.”

RESIGNATION

WHAT Thou givest I receive as well,
What withholdest I would not compel ;
For Thou only knowest, Thou alone,
What for me is bread and what is stone.

THE POEMS OF

WHO LOVES

WHO loves will learn to know
First rapture high,
Then pain, whose overflow
Is joy that cannot die.

TO NATURE

HAVE I not loved thee long and well?
Nor have I prated in the crowd,
And made my love a thing to sell
To buy my soul a silken shroud.

WILD FANCIES

I FEEL her clinging to my gown,
I hear her toddling feet;—
Wild fancies that my reason drown,
Wild fancies, yet how sweet!

INTERRUPTION

I CLOSED the volume at a call,
The wondrous story partly done;
And now I cannot find at all
The haunting tale I had begun.

IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

MY CHOICE

O HEIGHTS serene I might have known !
O, shadowy hand from cloudy throne !
Yet I preferred the battle plain,
Repenting not though bullets rain.

A PRAYER

L ET me not pass away and leave
Unfinished what I have to do ;
Direct me that I may achieve,
And still my strength revive, renew.

HOW FAR?

H OW far can bells be heard ?
The bells upon the car
That brings you, mark my word !
I hear afar, afar !

POEMS OF IDA AHLBORN WEEKS

REST

O LOVE, I rest in thee,
Secure as on the sea
The sea-gull poises there,
At home on deep, in air.

GREAT SOULS

GREAT souls thrive everywhere,
The task, the time, and place
Transcending by a grace
More subtle than the air.

"I'M NOBODY"—EMILY DICKINSON

O EMILY, your rank attracts me so
That in your company I fain would go;
We'll be a pair no heralds will pursue,
And from the world we shall receive our due.



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